

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PANAMA 06547 121615Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAB-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02
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R 121521Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3630
INFO PANCANAL
USCINCSO

UNCLAS PANAMA 6547

DEPT FOR ARA/PAF AND PAN

USCINCSO FOR J-2 AND PAO

PANCANAL FOR IO

E.O. 11652: N/A
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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTIONS

FOLLOWING SENT FROM USIS/PANAMA REPEATED FOR YOUR ACTION/INFO

UNCLAS PANAMA

SECSTATE FOR ARA/PAF & PAN

USIA FOR IOP/M, ILA, IBS/PL, IPS/PL

PART TWO OF TWO

MEDIA REACTION

1. PANAMA CITY.-- CANAL TREATY: SEPT. 12 MEDIA REFLECT WINDING
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DOWN OF EUPHORIA OF PAST WEEK, AND TURNING FROM US-LATAM
RELATIONSHIP TO CONSIDERATION OF UPCOMING PLEBISCITE OCT. 23
ON TREATY ISSUE. AS PRO-GOP MATUTINO COLUMN MOYOLANDIA PUT IT,
"THE RIVER HAS RETURNED TO ITS NORMAL LEVEL... IF THE PLEBISCITE
HAD BEEN HELD IMMEDIATELY (AFTER SEPT. 9 RALLY). PERHAPS THERE
WOULD HAVE BEEN NOT A SINGLE DISSENTING VOTE."

2. ALL MORNINGS CARRY FRONT PAGE STORIES ON UPCOMING PLEBISCITE PREPARATIONS, MEETINGS OF LIBERAL AND PANAMANIAN PARTIES TO DISCUSS TREATY AND MESSAGE OF ARNULFO ARIAS TO PANAMANIAN PARTY MEETING. ALL PAPERS CARRY EITHER AP OR EFE STORIES FRONT PAGE ON TORRIJOS INTERVIEW WITH US NEWS AND WORLD REPORT, SAYING THAT CANAL'S NEUTRALITY IS ITS ONLY TRUE DEFENSE. SEMI-INDEPENDENT LA ESTRELLA FRONT PAGES AP WASHINGTON ITEM, HEADED, "SENATE WILL VOTE ON CANAL TREATY IN JANUARY OR FEBRUARY, 1978; WILL BEGIN HEARINGS SOON."

3. SEVERAL EDITS AND COMMENTARIES CALL FOR CLOSE EXAMINATION OF TREATIES, AND FOR ALL ELIGIBLE PANAMANIAN TO EXPRESS THEIR OPINIONS AT BALLOT BOX. MATUTINO'S MOYOLANDIA CALLS FOR TREATY TEXT TO BE PRINTED IN ALL PAPERS, IN BOTH ENGLISH AND SPANISH, SO ALL CAN READ AND STUDY THEM. DURING NEGOTIATING PROCESS, MOYOLANDIA CONTINUES, "OUR DUTY WAS WITH TORRIJOS AND NEGOTIATORS. WE HAD TO GIVE THEM BACKING AND SUPPORT. WE HAD TO GIVE THEM A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE SO THEY COULD NEGOTIATE FREELY... BUT NOW THAT NEGOTIATIONS ARE FINISHED, NOW THAT TREATY IS SIGNED, PEOPLE ONLY HAVE COMMITMENT TO FATHERLAND AND TO THEIR OWN CONSCIENCES."

4. MATUTINO EDIT SAYS "PLEBISCITE IS NOT A POLITICAL ACT, BUT A PATRIOTIC ACT... A YES VOTE SIGNIFIES ACCEPTANCE OF CHANGE... A NO VOTE SIGNIFIES DESIRE THAT THERE BE NO CHANGE AND THINGS REMAIN AS THEY ARE..." PRO-GOP CRITICA EDIT
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REVIEWS TORRIJOS SPEECH OF SEPT. 9, INCLUDING HIS CALL FOR ALL TO VOTE IN PLEBISCITE, AND SAYS THAT AS WELL, "ABSTENTION FROM PLEBISCITE WOULD BE AN AFFRONT TO BROTHER NATIONS OF LATAM WHO MADE PANAMA'S CAUSE THEIR OWN." CRITICA AGREES THAT THERE WILL BE VOTES AGAINST TREATY, BUT "TO MEASURE THREATS BY HATE WHICH IS FELT AGAINST TORRIJOS IS MORAL DWARFISM... SUCH SPECIMENS EXIST IN BASEMENT OF DEGRADATION... BUT WE ARE SURE OF A LARGE MAJORITY OF APPROVAL WHEN VOTES ARE COUNTED."

5. CRITICA COLUMNIST CAMILO PEREZ CALLS VOTING IN PLEBISCITE "A CIVIC DUTY AND UNDENIABLE RIGHT," AND SAYS THAT "NOW MORE THAN EVER... ALL FORCES WHICH ARE OUTSIDE NATION SHOULD BE INVITED TO RETURN FREELY, TO EXPOUND AND DECIDE THEIR VOTE ON OCTOBER 23."

6. MATUTINO COLUMNIST RICARDO LINCE ALSO CALLS FOR CLOSE STUDY OF TREATIES AND FREE EXPRESSION OF OPINIONS, TO JUDGE AGREEMENT, WHICH HE SAYS, "HAS CAPITALIZED ON HISTORIC EXPERIENCES TO BASE ITS STABILITY ON MORAL PRINCIPLES OF PERMANENCE AND QUALITY, JUSTICE, EQUITY, COMPREHENSION AND UNDERSTANDING AT HUMAN LEVEL CONSTITUTE BASES OF PACT."

7. LA ESTRELLA EDIT DISCUSSES NEGOTIATING PROCESS AND HOW COMPLICATED IT IS: "FOR PANAMANIAN'S FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE WAS... TO RECUPERATE FULL JURISDICTION OVER ALL NATIONAL TERRITORY, ALONG WITH NECESSITY TO GAIN JUST AND ADEQUATE COMPENSATION FOR OUR NATURAL RESOURCE... AND FOR US, BASIC AND FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE WAS TO OBTAIN NECESSARY GUARANTEES THAT CANAL... WOULD CONTINUE FUNCTIONING NORMALLY AT ALL TIMES... REMAINING NEUTRAL AND OPEN... THUS SAID, IT CAN APPEAR SIMPLE, NOW THAT IT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED, BUT IT IS WORTH REMEMBERING DEPARTURE POINTS AND ORIGINAL POSITION OF US DURING SO MANY YEARS... OBSTACLES WHICH HAD TO BE OVERCOME WERE NORMOUS."

ITEM JORDEN

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Message Attributes

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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Case Number: n/a
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